

Begin It Now!

It is said that British troops and ships of war have been summoned to Halifax to strengthen with the display of force the weakness of the Canadian argument, and to buy time for the Canadian fisheries. While a fleet of Canadian cruisers keeps our fishermen out of Canadian inshore fishing grounds, a fleet of Canadian fishing vessels is catching herring in American waters at Eastport; and the Canadian fishermen do not conceal their contempt for a nation which is helpless to protect its citizens. At any moment our fishermen at Eastport may lose their patience. Blood may be shed, and the United States, in vindication of the national honor before the world, be forced into a war whose beginnings must be full of sickening disaster.

The Canadians do not believe that we will fight. England does not believe that we will fight. They know how wretchedly unprepared for war we are. The English character must have undergone an extreme and hitherto unnoted change if England and Canada do not act with brutal insolence and outrageous aggressiveness toward so weak a nation as this is known to be on the water and at the water's edge. There will be plenty of fair words and prostrating politeness and honeyed assurances from Downing street, but the word to weaken will not be sent to Ottawa until England is convinced that the United States are at length awake to their danger. When it is known that the American people are not bubbling over with indignation, but in firm earnest, and with all possible means preparing to resist their long negligence and put themselves in a state of defence—hating war, but too wise to gamble on the chances of perpetual peace—then, and not before, will Canada be told to stop its reckless policy.

Meanwhile what is done by the Government and the people of the United States in face of a threatening probability? When Americans should stand man by man to insure that the work of national self-protection should be begun with instant vigor, we find a part of the press belittling the danger, sneering at the Yankee fishermen—they are very poor and humble folk, doubtless—counting on a change in the English Ministry, spouting leaflets, with limitless facility proclaiming that nobody will ever attack us, and that if we do we can lick the universe. Yet if war comes, it will not be the fishermen of Yarmouth and Falmouth, but the inhabitants of Chicago and Detroit and Toledo, of San Francisco and New Orleans and Charleston, of Philadelphia and New York and Boston and Portland, who must bear the brunt. It would be a war in which one side had all the advantage. A few days might strike a blow at American commerce and industry from which they would not recover for a generation. The Aztecs and Peruvians were not more powerless to withstand the Spanish invaders than the people of the United States are to-day to protect their coasting trade and vessels of a first-class modern navy. And yet there are those who come to the danger, profess to believe that coast defence is a pseudonym of high tariff taxes, and wish the country to wait until the evil day has come. Do these confident gentlemen expect that, if war comes, our enemies will wait until we have built a navy and fortifications and gun foundries before they anchor off Coney Island and blow New York to pieces? Modern war is not conducted in the urban fashion of the battle of Fontenoy.

And what are Congress and the President doing? Congress is bent on passing and he apparently bent on signing bazaar bills and bazaar bills, enormous public works, enormous river and harbor bills, enormous appropriations to spend money uselessly or extravagantly. An undying army of pensioners and not a navy of war ships, deepening harbors to make them more accessible to foreign gunboats and not modern forts to defend them—such are the objects on which the rulers of the country are concentrating their energies, alighting the one imperative and inevitable emergency of the hour. The Democratic party, its wings flapped wide apart, diligently pecks out its own eye in a squabble over jute and iron pigs. The Republican party tries to make a party stalking horse of a great national duty. And so the session slips away.

How long will it take Congress to do something? It seems resolved to do nothing. The surplus; why does it not make a big place of it in building a navy and coast fortifications and gun foundries? Everything should be postponed to this one great need. It would be a glorious sight to see Mr. MORRISON and Mr. RANDALL and all the other Democrats in Congress unite with the Republicans to make a great appropriation for a navy and for coast defence. Make it fifty millions a year, make it seventy-five millions a year, make it a hundred millions a year—only make it large enough, and make it now! There can be no extravagance in complying with the demands of national self-respect. Other Congresses will carry on their business as usual, and glory enough for the Forty-ninth to have begun it with generosity and foresight. But stop silly shilly-shallying, and show England and the rest of the world that the republic means hereafter to depend upon its strength and not its weakness for its protection against foreign powers.

Churchill and Ireland.

That the Irish Nationalists can look for no direct assistance from Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL is plain from the speech in which on Monday the late Chancellor of the Exchequer defined his relation to existing parties. He will support the Ministerial demand for a Corcoran act, provided such a measure shall be needed to thwart the Nationalist plan of campaign, and he will not join Mr. CHAMBERLAIN in approving any species of compromise with the Home Rulers which involves the creation of a single legislature for the whole of Ireland. Yet while thus posing as the firm upholder of the rights of landlords and of the union of the kingdoms, his position of independence and of criticism must weaken the Government in the House of Commons, and hasten that appeal to the country which the so-called loyalists are anxious to defer, but which Gladstone and Parnell will spare no pains to bring about. From the moment that Lord RANDOLPH invokes the unpopularity of the constituencies in the controversy between himself and the Premier, it becomes his interest to have their judgment pronounced as speedily as possible.

There are many indirect ways in which CHURCHILL can contribute to the downfall of Lord SALISBURY without forfeiting his own hold upon the Tory party. In his Monday speech he intimated that he should not be able to support the estimates unless they had been materially altered since he had returned from office. The Ministers are

thus placed in an awkward predicament. If they now make decided changes in their programme of expenditure, they will find it hard to defend their refusal to make them earlier, when they might have averted a dangerous crisis. If they retain the items which were obnoxious to Lord RANDOLPH, they compel him to justify his course by revealing the grounds of his objections to certain appropriations for naval and military purposes. It is believed that an avowal of the true reasons for Lord RANDOLPH's resignation would involve an exposure of disgraceful wastefulness, if not of positive corruption in some administrative department. Should such charges be sustained by a good deal of evidence, some of the younger Tories would undoubtedly side with CHURCHILL on a motion disapproving of particular features of the GOVERNMENT budget, and they would be backed by the full strength of the Gladstonian and Parnellite parties. Then, if Mr. CHAMBERLAIN and Sir G. O. TRAVELLIER are really able to control about one-half of the Unionist vote, the SALISBURY Government would have but a faint chance of survival.

The friends of Ireland may, therefore, have without any discouragement that Mr. PARNELL's amendment to the address has been rejected. In any contest turning on the naked issue of home rule, the Tory Ministers are certain to be successful in the present House of Commons. They cannot be turned out by directly raising that question, than Mr. GLADSTONE could be driven from power in 1884 by resolution of his disastrous Soudan policy. But just as a section of Mr. GLADSTONE's followers found in May, 1885, an excuse for deserting him in an objectionable item of the CHURCHILL budget, so CHURCHILL's followers can easily find upon some pretext in the details of Mr. GOVERNMENT's estimate for attacking their aversion to a man whom they regard as an intruder, and of whose inability to strengthen the Cabinet in popular opinion they have just had such mortifying proof at Liverpool.

The City's Charity.

For fourteen years past a volunteer association, composed almost wholly of women, have devoted itself to the task of visiting and inspecting Bellevue Hospital and the other public institutions of charity in this city. It is known as the New York County Visiting Committee, and its report for 1886 is just published.

From this document we learn that on the 1st of last October the whole number of persons in the institutions inspected by the committee was 13,925, of whom 1,123 were officers and employees. The number of patients under treatment in the different hospitals during the year was:

Of these, 2,253 died during the year. The daily cost of maintenance ranged from 2 cents per head at the Homoeopathic, to 3 cents at the Charity, and 45 cents at Bellevue. The admirable management of the Emergency, or Maternity Hospital, is shown by the low death rate, only 8 out of 176 mothers confined having died. At the Charity, too,